

Schools' forum minutes – Leicester City Council

Minutes of the virtual Microsoft Teams meeting held on the 2 October 2024

Present

Schools Members

	Name
Mainstream Academies	Jane Ridgewell, Mike Hobbs, Julie Robinson,
Special Academies	~
Special School Governors	Lynne Folwell
Special School Heads	Sarah Osborne
Secondary School Head Representatives	
Secondary School Governor Representatives	Sabera Seedat
Primary School Governors	Glenys Mulvany, Sue Welford, Liam Mahoney
Primary School Head representatives	Karl Stewart, Matt Potts
Pupil Referral Unit	

Non-School members

	Name
Teaching Unions	Jennifer Day
School Support Staff Unions	Samuel Randfield (Chair)
16-19 Providers	~
Early Years (private, voluntary or independent) providers	Kelly (Substitute)

In Attendance

	Role
Simon Walton	Principal Accountant, Finance – Leicester City Council
Colin Sharpe	Head of Finance – Leicester City Council
Paresh Radia	Principal Accountant, Finance – Leicester City Council
Jo Poynton	HR Policy and Projects Manager – Leicester City Council
Robyn Cooper	Clerk to Schools' Forum – Leicester City Council

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Amelia Smith, Shaun Whittingham, Matthew Leedham and Sophie Maltby.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made in the business to be transacted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting (19 June 2024)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024 were accepted as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Union facilities time – Jo Poynton explained that there were two reasons for the underspend in union facilities time in 2023/24. She stated that firstly, there had previously been a pay as you go arrangement for academies and when this was discontinued, some double income had been received in the same year as payments were retrospective. She explained that the second reason was due to the vacancies in the NEU structure, which would remain due to the fall in income overall and the reduction in maintained school income due to academisation. Jo Poynton explained that the budget for forecast for the current financial year was a smaller overspend and this was down to those NEU vacancies.

5. De-delegation consultation

The de-delegation consultation had been shared with Schools' Forum. Simon Walton explained that the strand leads were available to join the meeting if there were specific questions. He explained that the main decision for the meeting was to agree on the format of the consultation and the period of consultation (proposal 4 October – 1 November).

Jennifer Day – Was the 5.6% teacher's pay award included in the trade union time?

Jo Poynton explained that the pay award was reflected in this year's forecast.

Voting - Format of the Consultation

Maintained school representatives were eligible to vote.

6 in favour

0 against

0 abstentions

Approved unanimously.

Liam Mahoney – Was it imperative that it comes back to the November meeting?
Simon Walton stated that it was due to the timing to be able to put it in the budget tool.

Liam Mahoney – In terms of school engagement, there was a lot happening in schools at the moment, including having to find a new catering provider. Was there something collective to be done with maintained primaries in relation to the consultation?

Matt Potts stated that this was normally what LPP did to support schools. He explained that they would look at the areas of the consultation and put some support and guidance out to schools. He stated that there was never a huge response to the consultation, but they would remind schools via the LPP newsletter and do what can to push. Simon Walton asked whether a meeting would be arranged for schools as he would suggest inviting the strand leads. Matt Potts explained that they usually just sent out support but could arrange meeting if Schools' Forum suggested that. Simon Walton stated that it was about trying to get a better response rate and ensure schools understood the areas.

Sue Welford highlighted that one of the key things to communicate was that there was no real change. She suggested questions could be around impact. She stated that it was important to help schools understand that what was being asked for in terms of de-delegation was the same sort of things.

Jane Ridgewell – Was there any flexibility over the end of consultation? There were DG meetings and also an LPP on the 7 November where the consultation could be addressed.

Simon Walton stated that it would be difficult to extend the consultation due to the need to undertake the analysis and turn round the report.

Simon Walton suggested that Matt Potts ask for questions to be submitted when he sent out the support to schools. Matt Potts would include this.

Julie Robinson noted that there were no representatives from LA maintained secondaries present at the meeting and so she would pass this onto Anna White and ask her to raise it at the next LEIP meeting.

Voting – Time frame for the consultation

Maintained school representatives were eligible to vote.

6 in favour

0 against

0 abstentions

Approved unanimously.

6. Update on High Needs Block recovery plan (verbal update)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. Any other business

Communication of Schools' Forum decisions

Samuel Randfield explained that Karl Stewart had raised this any other business item. Karl Stewart explained that he had attended the school business manager's network at the end of last term. He stated that knowledge of the decisions made at Schools' Forum had been raised, particularly those that impacted business managers (Minimum funding guarantee in particular). He asked whether there was a missing step in communication in terms of what was passed back to schools and what was appropriate to share and how the Forum did that. Samuel Randfield explained that minutes were accessible once confirmed and published. He asked whether they needed to publicise where you could find them. Karl Stewart suggested publishing a brief summary on Extranet. The working group with LA Finance and the business manager network was highlighted and whether this was a good method for communication.

Jane Ridgewell highlighted that a lot of decisions made by Schools' Forum were more in the gift of the local authority and they acted as more of a sounding board that the LA consulted on budgets and key issues. She stated that the queries had been around the minimum funding guarantee, which was complex, and she suggested putting some information out when budgets were released to help schools and business managers understand. Matt Potts stated that they did have the subgroup of business managers who would feedback to the wider network and so there was the platform for the LA to share information with them. He stated that it was a complex and ongoing area and so the clearer the comms the better and anything more than could be done to support schools to understand the area would be welcomed. Karl Stewart suggested sharing what Schools' Forum does and a summary of the minutes that goes out afterwards.

Sue Welford agreed that key bullet points shared quickly after the meeting would be beneficial. She also suggested some training around what Schools' Forum was and does for Headteachers and Business Managers. She highlighted that they needed to ensure that the website was kept up to date as it currently was not, and dates and minutes/paperwork should be on there.

ACTION - Samuel Randfield would have a discussion with Sophie Maltby about communication before the next meeting.

2024/25 Dates

- Wednesday 20 November 2024 1-3pm

- Wednesday 29 January 2025 1-3pm
- Wednesday 18 June 2025 1-3pm